



Australian Bureau of Statistics

2914.0.55.002 - 2006 Census of Population and Housing: Media Releases and Fact Sheets, 2006

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 27/06/2007 First Issue

MEDIA FACT SHEET

June 27, 2007

Embargoed 9.30 am (AEST)

70/2007

From doorknock to data processing: 2006 Census facts and figures

From the collection of Census paper forms from individual homes after Census Night (8 August 2006) to the return of the first Census results to the community today, ABS has undertaken a huge logistical and processing exercise involving state-of-the-art communications, mapping and data processing techniques. These facts and figures illustrate the magnitude of the task:

- Total number of paper forms received: 7,206,183. Total including eCensus Forms: 7,986,165.
- More than 20,000 km of paper Census form pages were processed, more than enough to stretch the full length of Australia's mainland coastal highway, Highway 1. Alternatively, the pages processed would stretch from Melbourne to New York with enough kilometres spare to cover the full stretch of Route 66.
- More than 63 million pages were processed through computer software systems, including intelligent character recognition software.
- It took less than a second to scan each page. The most pages scanned in one day was 1.23 million.
- Over 700 tonnes of Census material was removed from the Data Processing Centre (DPC) in Melbourne to be destroyed and recycled.
- The 884 temporary staff employed at the DPC ranged in age from 16 to 69 years, and between them had 64 different countries of birth.
- To get the data into the form it is in today, more than 3 billion transactions were carried out in the Census processing system.

Source: ABS 2006 Census.

This page last updated 27 June 2007

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